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FOLLOWING SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO AMMAN JERUSALEM JIDDA
KUWAIT LONDON MOSCOW PARIS TEL AVIV FROM BEIRUT 23 MAY 73:

QUOTE BEIRUT 5982

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT LE SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN PRESSURE TACTICS ON GOL

SUMMARY: GOL CURRENTLY IN POLITICAL/ PROPAGANDA STRUGGLE WITH
SARG AND LOCAL OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, AS WELL AS IN WAR
OF WILLS WITH FEDAYEEN. SYRIAN PRESSURES MAINLY DIRECTED
AT CAUSING GOL TERMINATE STATE OF EMERGENCY, USING
REOPENING OF SYRIAN- LEBANESE BORDER AS CARROT. HOWEVER,
SARG IS ALSO WORKING WITH LEBANESE LEFTISTS AND SUNNI
MOSLEMS AGAINST GOL, WITH GENERAL AIM OF EVENTUALLY
WEAKENING ITS ABILITY ENSURE FULL FEDAYEEN COMPLIANCE
WITH LATEST GOL- FEDAYEEN ARRANGEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. SA' IA LEADER ZUHAYR MUHSEN, WHO RETURNED HERE FROM
DAMASCUS MAY 22 AFTER REPORTEDLY BRIEFING PRES ASSAD
ON LATEST GOL- FEDAYEEN ARRANGEMENTS, HAS ANNOUNCED
THAT SARG DECISION TO REOPEN LEBANESE- SYRIAN BORDER IS
CONTINGENT ON FAVORABLE EVOLUTION OF GOL- FEDAYEEN RELA-
TIONS. HE ADDED SARG WILL ALLOW THOSE RELATIONS PASS
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THROUGH " PROBATION PERIOD" BEFORE MAKING SUCH DECISION. CONFIRMATION MUHSEN' S REMARKS APPEARED MAY 22 IN ARTICLE CARRIED IN OFFICIAL DAMASCUS DAILY AL BAATH, AND REPEATED HERE IN Wafa BULLETIN AND COMMUNIST DAILY AN NIDA, WHICH CLEARLY INDICATES SARG PLAYING ANTI- GOL GAME IN WHICH BORDER OPENING BEING USED TO KEEP PRESSURE ON GOL TO END STATE OF EMERGENCY AND THEREBY HELP FEDAYEEN GAIN MORE ROOM FOR MANEUVER. AS PART OF SAME GAME, SYRIAN MEDIA BEGAN COMPLAINING MAY 21 ABOUT GOL' S ALLEGED MALTREATMENT (I. E., ARRESTS AND DEPORTATIONS) OF SYRIAN NATIONALS IN LEBANON; AND SARG ASST FONMIN ISMAIL REPORTEDLY CONTACTED LEBANESE FONOFF SAME DAY TO DELIVER OFFICIAL PROTEST ALONG SAME LINES. THIS DREW PROMPT DENIALS FROM LEBANESE FONMIN ABOUHAMAD, WHO STATED ONLY PERSONS (INCLUDING SOME SYRIANS) BEING DETAINED HERE ARE THOSE PICKED UP FOR VIOLATING LEBANESE LAWS. FONOFF HAS THREE TIMES REQUESTED SARG PROVIDE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ITS ALLEGATIONS AND HAVE RECEIVED NONE.

2. AS ANOTHER PART OF SAME GAME, SYRIANS HAVE BEEN WORKING QUIETLY WITH LEBANESE LEFT- WING AND SUNNI POLITICAL LEADERS, SUPPORTING THEM IN CRITICIZING GOL (SEE SITREP 23). GROUP OF LEBANESE POLITICAL LEADERS WENT TO DAMASCUS LAST WEEK- END AND ON MAY 21 GROUP OF SYRIAN BAATH NOTABLES CAME TO BEIRUT TO MEET WITH SUNNI MUSLEM LEADERS FOR ALLEGED PURPOSE OF " EXPLAINING SYRIA' S TRUE POSITION" IN SUPPORT OF LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY. IN FACT, BAATHIST EMISSARIES TOOK LINE CRITICAL OF GOL AND ITS HANDLING OF INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AS WELL AS ITS TENDENCY " STRIKE AT" FEDAYEEN WHICH SARG RESOLUTELY OPPOSES. SOME LEBANESE OFFICIALS HOPE THAT SARG ATTITUDE MAY EASE ONCE SYRIA' S MAY 25 ELECTIONS ARE OVER AND ASSAD NOT AS PRESSED TO PLAY ROLE OF DEFENDER OF PALESTINIANS AND SUNNIS FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION. OTHERS ARE MUCH LESS CONFIDENT, CONVINCED THAT SYRIANS WILL KEEP CLOSE CONTACT WITH LEBANESE OPPOSITION AS WELL AS FEDAYEEN.

3. MEANWHILE, FEDAYEEN LEADERS, INCLUDING ' ARAFAT, CONTINUE EXPOUND PUBLIC LINE THAT FEDAYEEN WILL ADHERE STRICTLY TO LATEST ARRANGEMENTS WITH GOL. HOWEVER, JUDGING FROM LEAFLETS AND PAMPHLETS BEING CIRCULATED IN CAMPS (E. G., CONFIDENTIAL

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FBIS M181243), THEIR DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT THESE ARRANGEMENTS ENTAIL DIFFER CONSIDERABLY FROM GOL VERSION. ' ARAFAT HAS BEEN ASSURING HIS FOLLOWERS AND LOCAL SYMPATHIZERS THAT ARRANGEMENTSWILL NOT AFFECT FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT' S " BASIC POSITON" IN LEBANON, AND FATAH' S SALAH KHALAF-- IN SPEECH DELIVERED AT SHATILA CAMP MAY 20-- WENT SO FAR AS TO ASSERT THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES

WOULD ANY WEAPONS BE WITHDRAWN FROM CAMP(FBIS 212020). WE UNDERSTAND THAT EMOTIONS STILL SO HIGH IN CAMPS (PARTLY AS RESULT OF RHETORIC OF FEDAYEEN LEADERS) THAT NO EFFORT HAS YET BEEN MADE BY MIXED COMMITTEES AND PATROLS TO BEGIN REMOVAL OF HEAVY WEAPONS. GOL ALSO TAKING PUBLIC LINE THAT RELATIONS WITH FEDAYEEN ARE GOOD IN ORDER COOL DOWN RESENTMENT GENERATED BY BATTLE AND ENABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNDERSTANDING TO PROCEED SMOOTHLY ONCE IT BEGINS.

4. ON LOCAL POLITICAL FRONT, LEFTIST AND SUNNI MOSLEM LEADERS ARE CONTINUING THEIR AGITATION FOR CANCELLATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY AS PART OF GENERAL CAMPAIGN OF OPPOSITION TO HAFEZ GOVT AND POLICIES FOLLOWED BY PRES FRANGIE. CABINET MEETING SCHEDULED TONIGHT AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REVIEW ENTIRE SITUATION. IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT STATE OF EMERGENCY WILL BE LIFTED AT THIS WEEK' S CABINET MEETING, ALTHOUGH SOME MINISTERS SAID TO FAVOR LIFTING IT.

5. COMMENT: GOL IS CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN POLITICAL/ PROPAGANDA STRUGGLE WITH SARG, LOCAL LEFTISTS AND SUNNI MOSLEMS, AS WELL AS IN WAR OF WILL WITH FEDAYEEN. SO FAR, PRES FRANGIE HAS GIVEN NO INDICATION OF RETREATING FROM HIS DETERMINATION HOLD FEDAYEEN TO STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH LATEST ARRANGEMENTS. HE REPORTEDLY IS PLEASED BY PROGRESS TO DATE IN THIS REGARD, ALTHOUGH HE HAS BEEN VERY CRITICAL OF WHAT HE REGARDS AS EFFORTS BY LEFTISTS AND MOSLEM LEADERS TO COMPLICATE GOL- FEDAYEEN RELATIONS FURTHER. FEDAYEEN, FOR THEIR PART, ARE OBVIOUSLY HOPING THAT COMBINED SYRIAN AND LOCAL OPPOSITION PRESSURES OVER TIME WILL FORCE GOL TERMINATE STATE OF EMERGENCY AND EVENTUALLY WEAKEN ITS ABILITY TO ENSURE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDAYEEN PROMISES. HOUGHTON UNQUOTE RUSH
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